

'Blue Box' Is Linked to Phone Call Fraud

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MINEOLA, L. I., May 5—A 19-year-old Great Neck youth described by a faculty member of the New York Institute of Technology as a "boy genius" has been arrested with eight upstate students on charges of using electronic devices to make long-distance telephone calls free.

The arrests were made after a three-month investigation by security personnel of the New York Telephone Company, which said it had been cheated out of thousands of dollars.

The Great Neck youth, Peter Mokover, a sophomore at the New York Institute in Old Westbury, is "very bright with a high I.Q.," a teacher friend of his said yesterday. "He has literally worked with our technical department."

"He has a lot of good ideas," the teacher said.

"The odd thing is he doesn't need the money—he comes from a comfortable family," he continued. "But, if you can beat the system and beat the machine, if you can make the computer have a nervous breakdown. . . ."

Of the other students arrested, six are from the Clarkson Institute of Technology at Potsdam, N. Y., and two are from the State University at Potsdam.

District Attorney William Cahn of Nassau County said the telephone company had sought his aid in investigating a telephone in the Mokover home, from which nu-

merous calls were allegedly made throughout the country without charge.

Armed with a court order, detectives of the prosecutor's rackets bureau and telephone company personnel searched the home at 26 Henhawk Road last night. They said they found a small box measuring 5 by 6 by 3½ inches attached to a telephone in the youth's room.

The box, apparently homemade, contained a maze of wires, electronic equipment and a small battery, and had

14 buttons, a small switch and a hole for a jack on the top.

The prosecutor did not say who had made the box. The telephone company said similar devices had been used elsewhere in the country before.

According to Mr. Cahn, the device, known as a "blue box" — although it is not actually blue — worked as follows:

If the person wished to make a free toll call to the Los Angeles area, for ex-

ample, he would dial the area code—213—and then 555-1212 to reach the information operator there.

When the connection was made with the information operator, the caller used the switch on the top of the box to disconnect the operator. By doing this, he was connected to the area code telephone system.

Then, using the black buttons, he could punch any telephone number in the area without having the call recorded for charge purposes.

The telephone company became suspicious when computer cards showing the amount of time used for information calls indicated that some calls were taking much more than the usual one to three minutes.

An investigation by the company led to the Mokover youth's telephone and the telephones in Potsdam. A company spokesman said the upstate arrests "were tied in with calls made by the Great Neck boy." Two "blue boxes" were confiscated in Potsdam.

The state police in Potsdam identified those arrested as Lee Maisler, 19, of 29 Kings Point Road, Great Neck, L. I.; Jonathan Wolfert, 18, of 5 Star Road, Great Neck; David Levy, 19, of 67-49 Kessel Street, Forest Hills, Queens; Elizabeth Dooley, 19, of 2061 St. Raymond's Avenue, the Bronx.

Also, William Cotter, 19, of Baldwinsville, N. Y.; Robert Darling, 24, of Marcy, N. Y.; John Weston, 23, of Utica, and Mary McGill, 20, of Antwerp, N. Y.



The "blue box" that was allegedly used to make long-distance telephone calls. It was confiscated on Long Island.

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